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Feb. 19, 2014 -- The Hon. Michele Flournoy opened her remarks to the Class of 2014 by noting her pleasure at speaking at the Army

War College where the students challenge her and she learns so much from the question and answer session.

Flournoy, Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of the Center for a New American Security and a senior adviser at the Boston Consulting Group, was the fourth prominent speaker in the Commandant's Lecture Series.

The theme of this year's Commandant's Lecture Series explores Landpower and the balance of joint capabilities for 21st century challenges.

Fluornoy focused on three topics: the key parameters that are defining the decision making environment at the most senior levels in Washington for the next several years; the evolving strategic landscape, and the implications for both the Army and the U.S. Armed Forces.

One of the key elements of decision making involves getting our economic house in order, she suggested.

Perceptions of political paralysis generate doubt in some quarters abroad about America's resilience and leadership in the world. But the U.S. standing remains strong.

The strategic landscape is influenced by the international security environment, the rise of new powers which are fundamentally changing the balance of power, and continued threats from groups like Al-Qaeda. We have to be smarter about when and how we engage and use all the instruments of our national power in a more integrated way, said Flournoy.

So, she asked the students to consider: what does this mean in general and for the Army? And how do we maintain the best Army in the world? And what are the best practices and lessons learned from the past 10 years of war?

There is a simmering debate among military officers about what worked and what did not. This debate needs to occur in the open, resulting in constructive criticism, she said. "I hope Carlisle can play a critical role in hosting that debate," said Flournoy.

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